

Becoming Licensed – Frequently Asked Questions

How many children can I serve with a state license?

A family day home license can be issued for six to 12 children under the age of 13, exclusive of the provider's own children or any children who reside in the home. (Note: State law requires the home to be registered or licensed if more than four children under the age of two are in care, including the provider's own children or other children who live in the home.) The licensed capacity is the number of children allowed in care at any one time.

Can I still be licensed if I want to serve fewer children?

Yes, you may apply for voluntary licensure. We process these as soon as possible, but please understand that we must give priority to applicants who require licensure.

What's the advantage of having a state license?

You will have a licensing inspector who is available to answer questions and help with problems. You will be able to reassure parents (and insurance carriers) that your home has met health and safety standards. You will receive information and training opportunities. These are but a few of the many advantages of licensure. For full information, please ask for a copy of the brochure on our support services to providers.

What will be required of me when I am licensed?

You are probably already doing most of the things required of a licensed provider. These include making your home safe for children, having plans to handle emergency situations, having toys and equipment for children to use, and providing daily activities for children. You will also need to serve nutritious meals and snacks (provided by you or the parents) and keep records on you, your assistant and the children. Some of the key standards caregivers must meet, besides those discussed elsewhere in this paper, are:

- To be understanding of the various capabilities, interests, needs and problems of children in care;
- To have the ability to relate to children with courtesy, respect, patience and affection;
- To maintain a clean, smoke-free environment that is free of hazards;
- To store firearms unloaded, apart from the ammunition and locked away from children's access; and, to keep other dangerous substances inaccessible to children;
- To meet fire safety requirements and to have a telephone;
- Have a crib, cot, rest mat or bed for each child to use while resting or napping;
- To have age-appropriate activities for children throughout the day;
- Never to shake, bounce, spank or pinch children or to use any other form of corporal punishment;
- To ensure a prompt change of clothing or diaper when the child is soiled or wet;
- To get a tuberculosis test for caregivers or other adult household members who come in contact with the children or who handle food served to children;
- To maintain current physical examination and immunization records for children and send children home who show signs of illness;

- To keep certain records, such as parental service agreements and permission to use a substitute provider; and, to keep information about children and families; confidential unless parents give permission to discuss it otherwise.

How much space do I need?

There's no specific square footage requirement, but a reasonable amount of both indoor and outdoor space must be available for children's activities. A good "rule of thumb" is to plan on at least 25 square feet of indoor activity space for each child in care.

Would I need an assistant?

Usually, but it depends on the ages of the children in care. Standards require the equivalent of one caregiver for every:

- Four children under 16 months old;
- Five children from 16 through 23 months;
- Eight children from two through four years of age, and
- 16 children from five through nine years of age.

Will I need a criminal records check or Central Registry clearance for abuse/neglect?

Yes, both a criminal record check and a Child Protective Services (CPS) Central Registry clearance are required. A criminal records check is required for the applicant, the applicant's spouse, any assistants and all adult household members. A CPS clearance is needed for the applicant, the spouse, any assistants and household members 14 years of age and older.

When you apply for a license, you will receive the necessary forms with your application packet. The criminal records check request form must be completed and sent with a money order, certified check or company check to the Virginia State Police. Anyone convicted of specific serious crimes (such as felony child abuse/neglect, murder or sexual assault) cannot be licensed and cannot be employed or volunteer in a child welfare agency.

The form to release information from the CPS Central Registry must be completed, notarized and sent with a check or money order to the Virginia Department of Social Services. A license cannot be issued if any caregiver or member of the household 14 years of age or older is listed in the Central Registry for abuse or neglect.

How can I get a state license?

When you're ready to apply, call the licensing office in your area to find out when the next orientation to licensing session will be held. Application packages are available at the session. The application must be returned with an application fee. After references are checked, the licensing inspector will visit you to make sure you can meet the licensing standards. Once a complete application is received, if all requirements are met, a license can usually be issued within 60 days.

Do I need any other types of license or permits?

Zoning approval is required in many areas and some localities also require a business license or permit. Contact your local zoning office to find out if you need a zoning permit. They should be

able to tell you if a business license or any other type of permit is needed. Some localities have special child care offices that can help you; some also offer training.

How can I get more information?

If you have additional questions about licensing, please call the office that serves your locality, or call our toll-free licensing information line:

- (800) KIDS-LIL (543-7545)
- [Find Richmond Area Phone Numbers for Help](#)